

# **The Current Status Of Archaeological Tourism In Libya**

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## **Introduction**

The Libyan economy, which is volatile and unpredictable like a number of other economies, depends heavily on oil revenue. It is recognised by many oil economies that it is unwise for them to rely totally on their production and export of oil, and to use the oil revenues simply to fund domestic development projects and consumption. Consequently, it has become essential for countries in this position to rise to the challenge of how to achieve sustainable economic development through the appropriate investment of oil revenue, which will in turn generate non-oil revenue, and guarantee the means for future development and prosperity.

In the case of Libya, the primary aim of the economic development plans in the 1970s and 1980s and the subsequent plans since those decades, has been to diversify the economy, taking the focus away from oil. This was due to two reasons: firstly, the instability of world oil prices, and secondly, the lack of formal economic plans to overcome this problem (WTO, 1998).

As a result, Libya has introduced tourism as an attractive developmental option to help sustain the national economy, and this research study concentrates on the development of the tourism sector in Libya, which may have the potential to become the most promising opportunity for foreign exchange earnings in the future. Nonetheless, developments in the tourism sector have been slow, and such an observation is a major reason for conducting this kind of research.

Tourism marketing in developing countries including Libya is an important aspect in promoting and selling tourist products, and thus as an 'engine' for the economy, but such countries usually suffer from a number of associated



problems, one of which is the difficulty in marketing tourism to the consumer. These challenges may be due to the lack of expertise and funds allocated for the purpose of marketing, as well as under-developed tourism infrastructures, including inadequate distribution systems.

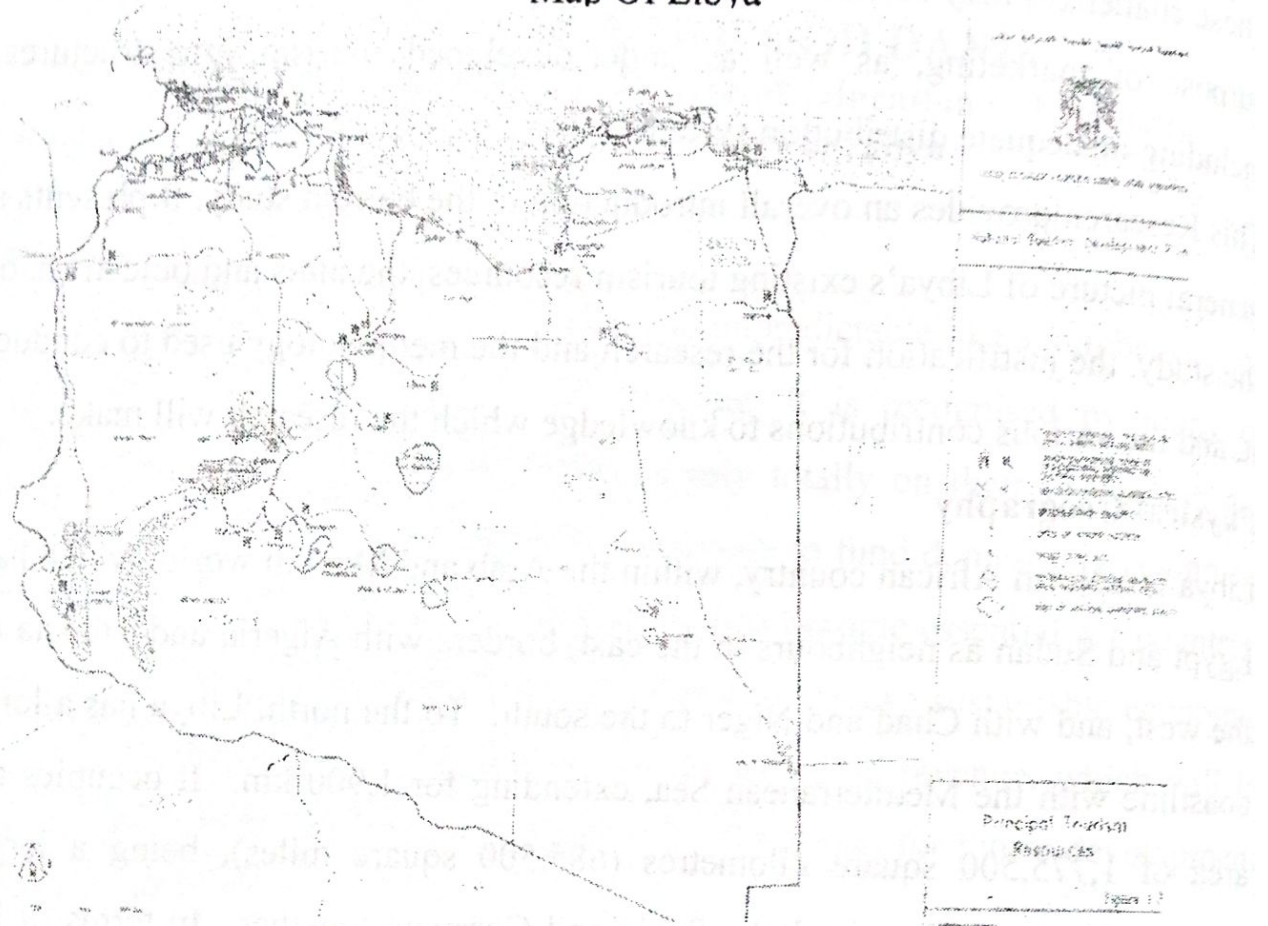
This Research provides an overall introduction to the current study. It presents a general picture of Libya's existing tourism resources, the aims and objectives of the study, the justification for the research and the methodology used to conduct it, and the various contributions to knowledge which the research will make.

### **Physical Geography**

Libya is a North African country, within the Arab and Muslim world, which has Egypt and Sudan as neighbours in the east, borders with Algeria and Tunisia to the west, and with Chad and Niger to the south. To the north, Libya has a long coastline with the Mediterranean Sea, extending for 1,900 km. It occupies an area of 1,775,500 square kilometres (685,500 square miles), being a large country the size of France, Italy, Spain and Germany together. In terms of its terrain, Libya has its coastal plains, northern mountains, the northern plateau, and in the south is the extended Sahara Desert. The climate changes according to the regions, with the Green mountains and part of the Gafara Plain, enjoying a Mediterranean climate, and the remainder of the country experiencing a semi-arid, and arid climate. Much of Libya is desert (45% with 25% sand dunes), the rest being arable land (19%), permanent crops (17%), and pastures (20%) and forest (4%). Libya is rich in natural resources, having plentiful supplies of oil and natural gas, and other deposits of iron ore, sebkhah salts and pastures. Agriculture and fishing are its main industries outside the oil sector.



## Map Of Libya



### Population and Climate

Libya is bordered to the north by the Mediterranean, having a coastline of approximately 1,900 km, and a total area of 1,760,000 sq km. Although a large country, it has a small population, and recently important changes have occurred, in which it has developed from being a relatively poor desert land with the lowest standards of living worldwide, to becoming one of the world's oil producing nations.

The population centres and areas of agricultural wealth are located in two coastal areas, stretching between the border with Tunisia and Misratah in the west, and between Ajdabiya and the Egyptian border in the east. According to the census of population carried out in 1995, the total Libyan population amounted to 4.389,000 million people (51% males and 49% females), with 85% concentrated in the eastern and western coastal plains.



In addition, there were an estimated 0.4 million non-Libyan nationals resident in the country at that time. The last census of population conducted in 2006, the total Libyan population amounted to 5.298,000 and in 2010 the total population amounted to 5.702,000 people (The Libyan government Ministry of Planning Bureau of Statistics and Census Statistics Book 2010). The urban population accounts for 2.5 million people and is growing at a relatively high rate of 7.5% annually. However, the national population growth rate has decreased significantly in recent years and now stands at about 2.2% per annum. Approximately 38.5% of the population (1.03 million) are economically active, (60.5% males, and 15.3% females), and with an estimated 1.7 million children under the age of 15 years, pressures to find increased employment opportunities in the future are predicted to grow. Consequently, developments in the tourism sector would be likely to provide much-needed jobs.

In comparison to the country's land area, the Libyan population is actually very small, and characterised as indicated in the previous paragraph, by a youthful and geographically highly-concentrated population. In fact, Libya is the fourth largest country on the African continent, the strategic core of Arab Africa, and yet has one of the smallest populations of all African states. Libya's climate is one reason for the spatial distribution of population centres, since the wide range of temperatures, caused by the Mediterranean Sea in the north and the Sahara Desert in the south, are the principle factors that determine the movements of populations, as well as the location of productive development.

Table ( 1) presents details of the population according , between 1995 -2010.

**Table 1: Development of Libyan Population ( 1995 -2010 )**

Population	1995	2006	2010
Number of Libyan population ( 000 )	4.389	5.298	5,702
Male	2.231	2.687	2,890
Female	2.158	2.610	2,812



## **Tourism Attractions in Libya**

The attractions of any tourism destination are viewed differently by the various inclinations of the tourists who visit, and in this respect it is necessary to consider how a 'tourist' can be defined. According to the World Tourism Organization, tourists are people who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited" ([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki//Tourism](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki//Tourism)). Youell (1998) deduces from this, that tourists can be categorised as people who are:

- "Away from their normal place of residence, although they will be returning home at some point in the future
- On a visit that is temporary and short-term, but is not greater than 12 months in duration
- Engaged in activities that one would normally associate with tourism
- Not necessarily staying away overnight, but sometimes merely on a day visit (excursion)
- Not always away from home for holiday purposes, but may be away from home on business" (Youell, 1998:9-10)

These conclusions have arisen from earlier and narrower definitions, such as that of the League of Nations in 1937 suggesting the tourist to be "one who travels for a period of at least 24 hours in a country other than in which he usually resides" (cited in Holloway, 1998:2). Now, the concept of a tourist has been broadened to include a whole range of people away from their usual place of residence, for an equally wide range of reasons. With this understanding, Libya can be shown to possess many valuable archeological tourist attractions. Such attractions in any destination can be categorised as climatic, scenic, cultural or historical, and they exercise a gravitational influence on non-residents, with the choice of a destination being influenced by one or any mixture of these attractions. Tourists vary in their reasons for travelling to a



destination, and consequently, the ranking of any destination depends upon the different preferences as exercised by tourists in these markets.

As mentioned earlier, Libya has a long coastline with the Mediterranean Sea, thereby offering the potential for the full range of beach activities, and sea sports that traditional tourist destinations provide. Additionally, there are a variety of natural features along the coastline, such as sandy beaches, wild palm trees and rocky shores. The beaches extend from Tripoli towards the east for about 200km, and are very popular with local residents. Additionally, however, Libya is rich in ancient archaeological cities and monuments from Roman, Phoenician, Greek and Islamic civilizations; and from more recent times, historical buildings such as mosques and churches, and museums housing magnificent artefacts. The tourist attractions of Libya for example, its scenery, its cultural heritage, and its beaches, may be grouped and explored under the following sub-headings, although it should be understood that this section does not attempt to list every possible attraction:

#### **a) Beaches and Sea**

Libya has an extensive coastline nearly 2,000 kilometres long, much of it still in a natural, undeveloped state. There is considerable variety in the nature of this coastline, ranging from wide; palm tree fringed sandy beaches, to rocky shores backed by low cliffs and mountains. There is only one significant island off the coast, at Farwa, although smaller islets and rocky outcrops add interest to the coastal landscape at, for example, Besieses and Susah.

The west of the country possesses extensive areas of good quality beaches, the most notable being at Farwa Island, west and east of Zuwarah, and Melita and Talil beaches to the west of Sabratha. These beaches are generally fairly deep (typically 50 metres and over), comprising fine white sand and backed by some form of vegetation, such as palm trees, grass and shrub-covered sand dunes or forest. Some development has taken place in these areas in the past but the



extent of the available beach and the relatively poor access and distance from Tripoli has meant that much of the area still retains its natural beauty and tourism potential.

Beaches in the Tripoli area and at Al Khums, Zliten and Misratah are extremely popular with local residents but are not extensive and are under pressure from visitor numbers. Nevertheless, there are some small but excellent beaches between Garabulli and Al Khoms, for example at Besieses and Negaisa, which are potentially of international quality.

Traditionally, the Gulf of Sirt has not been used for recreational purposes because of its distance from urban centres, difficult climate and priority given to industrial and security uses. Furthermore, beaches in the Gulf generally are not as good as elsewhere and lack vegetation or interesting landscape features. Access from the road is also often poor. Nevertheless, there are isolated beaches that might have potential for development if problems of access and infrastructure provision can be overcome. Such beaches are located south east of Misratah in the Tawargha area, at Sultan east of Sirt and at Azzuwaytinah, north of Ajdabiya.

The Benghazi area possesses a number of good but relatively narrow beaches of fine sand, some of which have been developed into beach resorts for the domestic holiday market. There are more extensive beach areas to the north east of Benghazi towards Tokrah and beyond to Tolmetha. Some of the beaches have too little depth for resort development but other beaches, such as that at Tolmetha, are deep enough to serve as small resorts of international quality. There are also a number of good beaches between Al Haniyah and Hamamah, further to the east and in the vicinity of Susah. Beyond Susah towards Demah, the coastal scenery is often superb but beaches are generally limited and access is often difficult. Tobruk possesses a number of reasonably good beaches largely serving the domestic recreational market.



In general, beaches near the main urban areas are well used in the summer months, and beach resorts and holiday villages are a popular component of the domestic tourist market. However, only a narrow range of activities are currently available at coastal areas and the wide variety of water sports usually found at Mediterranean coasts is absent. Furthermore, most beaches suffer from a wide range of problems, including:

- Overuse, especially in the Tripoli area, where beaches are often crowded, especially during the summer and on Fridays;
- over-development, with beach resorts being built with little regard to landscape beauty, and over emphasis on 'hard' facilities such as buildings and car-parking at the expense of trees and natural landscape features;
- Pollution, in the form of water contamination from urban or industrial sources, or, more commonly, from litter and debris;
- Lack of management, which is most evident in the dumping of rubbish, and damage to beaches from vehicles;
- Use of some beaches as a source of building materials, thus destroying the beach or its surroundings; and
- Accessibility, especially in areas backed by sabkha and forest.

Despite the problems identified above, there are a significant number of good quality beaches and attractive coastal areas that could be developed in a sensitive and imaginative way for both the domestic and international tourist markets. In addition, there is also scope for the development of complementary recreational activities, such as scuba-diving and sailing that would broaden the range of activities available.

#### **b) The Desert**

Over 90% of Libya's land area is desert and this part of the country contains many attractive features, such as an extensive wealth of pre-historic art, and agriculture, all of which have tourism value, especially as they become more



accessible to visitors. The desert is no longer a sea of moveable sands, devoid of water and comfort, but is rather a fertile, busy land, representing an independent world as Libya's oil and associated industrialisation activities merged with the traditional culture of the Sahara inhabitants to transform the desert into green areas. Science and technology have controlled large areas of sands, to make the desert an important source for earning a living.

As noted by the World Tourism Organization (1998), the Libyan Desert landscape presents a blend of attractions, including eroded rock formations, mountains, lakes, oases, stony deserts, wades, areas of volcanic cones and vast sand seas, and a distinct folklore and culture.

### **c) The Mountains**

In the eastern and western parts of Libya, the Jebel Akhdar (green mountains) and Jebel Gharbi (western mountains) form the main mountain chains, both rising to a maximum of 1,000m, and being characterised by narrow wadis and steep valleys located near the coast.

### **Historical and Cultural Attractions**

In any review of the potential for tourism in Libya, archaeological and historical sites would constitute a major part.

#### **a) Archaeology**

Archaeology has long comprised an important element of tourism in the Mediterranean, especially in Egypt and Tunisia. However, Libya also has some of the best classical antiquities in the world, the most significant archaeological remains dating back to the Phoenicians, who founded the cities of Sabratha, Oea (Tripoli) and Leptis Magna. These cities, in the west of the country, were built by the Romans and the Romanised Libyan population, who endowed Libya with a rich heritage. The ancient cities from the Phoenician and Roman eras are located along the northern coastline:



**Sabrata (Sabratha)** is 70km west of Tripoli, and stands as the earliest Phoenician settlement from around the 6th Century BC, having been buried under the ruins of the subsequent Roman town that was constructed between 139-180 AD. Sabratha City is one of the three cities from which the north western part of Libya got its name and which the ancient Greeks called Tripolis (i.e. three cities). It was also named Emporia (trade centres). The three cities of Sabratha, Oea and Leptis were the most active Punic markets and trade ports until the weakness of Carthaginian rule, expressed in the degenerating Numidian State, allowed the Romans to extend their influence. The present relics of Sabratha date from the first and second centuries of the Roman Empire, when the Punic temples surrounding the forum, basilica and curia were renovated. During the same era, an intensive residential quarter on the main road leading to the museum and the other main road intersecting the first one at a rectangular angle along the Byzantine wall was built, to be followed by the development of another residential quarter stretching between the theatre and the main road from the west to the east. The streets are straight and have symmetrical intersections according to the Hellenic planning system, thereby producing symmetry between the designs of the theatre and residences, dating to the second century AD, during the rule of the emperor Antonius Pius and Marcus Aurelius (138-180 AD)

This era is regarded as one of the City's most prosperous, and it is probable that during this time, and under the rule of Antonius Pius, Sabratha was transformed into a Roman settlement with Roman civil rights given to its inhabitants.

**Lebda (Leptis Magna)** stands 90km east of Tripoli, and is also believed to be one of the oldest Phoenician towns in North Africa. It is considered to be the most outstanding archaeological settlement in Libya. Because of its location and the fact that the Emperor Septimus Severus was born there, it was an important trading centre in Roman times. The site is three kilometres to the east



of Horns at the mouth of Wadi Lebda along its western bank, and about 123km to the east of Tripoli on the coastal road.

**Leptis Magna's** magnificent antiquities and various other features, make it unique among eternal archaeological cities. It is one of the three main cities whose establishment was associated with the arrival of Phoenician immigrants (at the beginning of 1,000 BC) who settled in areas on the Libyan coast in order to trade and living among Libyans. These three cities of Leptis Magna, Oea and Sabratha, mentioned earlier as being attributed the name Tripolis by the Greeks, were also later known as Tarabulus in Arabic.

The name Leptis is mentioned in Greek and Roman references, accompanied by the word great or big; Leptis Megali in Greek and Lepkis Magna in Latin, derived from its Punic origin (Lepki) which was inscribed on coins minted in Leptis in the first century BC. Leptis Magna was one of the biggest and most spacious cities in the Libyan Punic age, and then in the Roman age, particularly in the era of the Emperors of the Severus family (193-225 AD), who descended from a noble family from Leptis itself. As a result of excavations in Leptis, the site now demonstrates the city in its successive Roman roles, and includes the fortresses built by the Byzantines in the last stage of its life.

Before the city's expansion at the beginning of the Roman era, the old forum and the relics of surrounding temples near the harbour were its focal points, and it is possible to chart the city's development and growth by reference to the consecutive dates of establishment of its grand public premises, such as the Punic market (built in 8 BC), the Theatre (in 1BC), the Calchidicum in 11-12 AD, then other buildings established in the first and second centuries AD, including the baths of Emperor Hadrian (established between 126 and 127 AD) and renovated during the era of Septimius Severus (193-211).

**Shahat (Cyrene)** lies 200km east of Benghazi, having been established by Greek immigrants in the middle of the 7th Century, prior to which, the city of



Kurena, 621m above sea level, had been built on the site. Gradually, Cyrene grew into a kingdom, peaking around 400 BC, and second only to Athens in importance. Later, under Roman rule, Cyrene enjoyed a renaissance. The current city of Shahat contains ruins reflecting both periods.

The town's position, with its beautiful scenery reminded Greek settlers of Delphi in the Itplia mountainous area in Greece, where the Temple of Apollo can be found, and as this was a place where Ancient Greeks went to receive wisdom and prophecies concerning their personal affairs, the Greek settlers earmarked the most prominent site in Cyrene for Apollo's temple, at the water spring.

The town developed in two sections, one including the sacred yard of Apollo, and the other occupying the neighbouring hill including public buildings such as the main city centre, residences and Greek shops stretching to the north. These features of the city disappeared as a result of renovating buildings in the Roman age, and other renovations were made, which are evident at the market yard (Agora), and the city consultative and the burial yard of King Batus, which goes back to the City's foundation in 631 BC.

These features can be seen from the entrance of Proculus' Yard surrounding the Caesarian arcade. At the centre are the Temple of Bachus, the Justice House, Basilica, King Batus Street, the Roman theatre, the Hellenic theatre (Odeon), Hermes and Hercules arcade, and the magnificent house of Jason Magnus from the second century AD to the north. Near to that house is the Temple of Hermes and the House of Hessiekus. The Agora (Greek market) is decorated with a magnificent arcade from the north and the west, and public buildings including the Council (Britannium), the Temple of Jupiter, the sea monument, the temple of Deheter, the western entrance and the sports building (gymnasium), are adjacent



It can be understood that these magnificent Greco-Roman ruins in Libya represent valuable tourist assets, given the fact that they are comparable with sites in Egypt and Greece that have long attracted discerning tourists in large numbers. This type of cultural attraction is guaranteed to appeal to the more desirable tourist segment, that by its nature is keen on sustainability, rather than erosion of natural habitat.

**Germa, Ghirza and Fezzan** are ancient Libyan towns occupied by early Libyan tribes that co-existed with each other to resist Roman influence, but nonetheless prospered as a result of trade with the Romans. The Greek historian Herodotus (484-424 BC), records such developments in his fourth book of history.

**Sousa (Apollonia)** is found 10 miles to the north of Cyrene. Being positioned on the coast, it naturally developed as a port, in tandem with Cyrene, upon which it depended completely. During Byzantine rule, Apollonia became the province's main city, as it did also under Turkish rule, when it changed its name in 1897.

Apollonia was so called by the Greek settlers in honour of their god Apollo, and lies on the coastal strip, 20km away from Cyrene, to which it was linked by a road cut through the rocks in the Roman age. The features of this road are still observable, being the same road asphalted by Italians in 1914, with some modifications.

Apollonia's main visitor attractions include the church ruins, which show a triangular design decoration, and are located outside the walls. Other churches were also established in the ruins of Roman buildings. Additional principal features include the Theatre outside the eastern fortresses, which was built in the Hellenic age according to Greek design, and later re-organised during the era of Emperor Domitian (92-96 AC). Other attractions are the Baths discovered in recent years, and the ruins of the Byzantine palace which was the ruler's



headquarters in the sixth century AD, and which are found by the hill next to the Baths. The new Soussa was established during the Turkish era in 1897 as a village for the settlement of Moslem immigrants coming from the island of Crete. Its excellent climate, scenery and generally attractive environment, make it an important site for tourism.

**Ghadames (Cydamae)** is located in the desert, 683km south west of Tripoli, where it has been sustained by a water spring that has allowed it to become one of the most important commercial stations in the region. Given its desert strategic location, various civilisations (Greek, Roman, Garamant and Muslim) have all left their mark on the city, as evident on the rocks, in its caves, ruins and sand dunes.

**The oasis of Ghadames**, the most beautiful and important oasis in the Libyan desert, known to its many visitors as the 'pearl of the desert', has a special fascination that distinguishes it from other oases, principally because it is spacious, planted with palm tree forests, has springs of drinkable water, and a natural and unique lake which is ideal for fishing and bathing. These assets together with its folkloric traditions are genuine attractions for tourists

**Tolmeitha (Ptolemais)** lies 28km to the north of Al-Marj (Barce) town, the two places being linked by a paved road that passes through a mountainous area of fascinating scenery. To the north of Tolmeitha is the Mediterranean Sea and from the south it overlooks Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar (green mountain). The city is of historical importance, and therefore, a tourist attraction.

Ancient Ptolemais is near modern Tolmeitha, and is also of interest to tourists. It was established as a port for Al-Marj in the sixth century BC by the Cyrenacians, but when Cyrenaica came under the rule of the Ptolemy family in Egypt, 323-30 BC, the town was renamed to reflect this, and hence it came to be known as Ptolemais after King Ptolemy II (309-246 BC).

c) **Culture**



In addition, to the attractions discussed already, there are other cultural features which are considered significant, these being handicrafts, food and cooking, art and music (including paintings and sculpture), festivals and special events, and popular singing and dancing.

Handicrafts, such as traditional jewellery and clothing, provide products of interest to tourists, but following the discovery of oil, the concentration on producing such cultural handicrafts lessened, and fewer people were deployed in this way, although now this seems to be an area of potential growth. Additionally, the mix of Arabic and Mediterranean foods and cooking, and traditional music is widely heard, especially in connection with cultural festivals and special events focussed on traditional arts such as dancing, music and singing in authentic, and historical surroundings. Recently, a small number of private art galleries have also been established, offering high quality works to the more wealthy tourists and art experts generally. All these facets of Libyan culture are of tourist interest.

### **Statement of the Problem and Justification for the Research**

In today's increasingly globalised world, tourism is becoming accessible to more people, and offers more countries the opportunity to become tourist destinations, thereby contributing towards the development of their economies, and to their society in general, as tourist influxes influence local cultures. As seen in the previous section, Libya is a country that has much to offer the prospective tourist, yet because of its political and cultural history, it is extremely undeveloped in tourism terms. From a political perspective, as is clear from its archaeological heritage, Libya has had many different governments, including the Phoenicians, Romans, Greeks, and latterly the Italians. This has prevented the development of the native Libyan people, and only in comparatively recent times has the country emerged as a republic with a stable government that is able to determine its own future. In cultural terms,



despite Libya's obvious appeal for certain types of traveller, others are definitely deterred from visiting by the lack of facilities, and the prevailing cultural and religious climate that does not sanction the same time of behaviour as is common in other major holiday destinations, for example, standards of dress, especially for women, on the beaches is completely different from what western tourists will accept. Certainly, in comparison with its Tunisian and Egyptian neighbours that have enjoyed the economic benefits of tourism for many years, Libya is a newcomer to tourism, and has not begun to adjust to its demands.

There are three reasons why tourism has not been a focus of Libyan development until the current time. The first is that the Italian colonisation of Libya did not consider tourism to be a priority, and secondly, with the discovery of large supplies of oil, Libya was able to underpin a developing economy, especially after gaining political independence. Thirdly, Libya's political isolation resulting from UN and US sanctions has not provided a fruitful environment for international tourism development. However, sharp increases in the world oil prices during 1973-74 and 1979-80 that occurred after the Arab-Israeli war and the Iranian crises respectively, led to much larger oil revenues for all the oil producing countries, and as a consequence, Libya like most of these countries, established ambitious plans for economic and social development. However, these plans were entirely dependent upon oil revenue for the finance, and with the world recession in the early 1980s, particularly in 1982, the picture changed. For Libya, this problem was greater than for other countries due to the USA ban on the importation of Libyan oil from 1981. Up to that point the USA had imported 40% of Libyan oil. Nevertheless, world oil price fluctuations, for the last three years oil has been the only serious source of income over the last three decades, all other areas of development depend upon it.



Libya's oil resources are not, however, everlasting, and Libya will not be able to maintain its current economic situation, without industrial diversification. Indeed, there are understandable fears that as oil resources are depleted, serious problems will arise, and economic planners have aired their concerns and expressed the view that now is the time for Libya to consider alternatives. Consequently, the government has consulted various organisations and bodies within Libyan society and started the implementation of various strategies for lateral economic growth.

One of the areas in which Libya has great scope for development is as a tourist destination, since its long stretches of coastline and fine examples of cultural heritage such as Tripoli, Leptis Magna Antiquities, Sabratha, Ghirza Cyrene (Shahat), Tolmeitha (Ptolemais), Apollonia (Marsa Soussa), Ancient Germa, Ghadames, Janzur, Villa Silene, Kabaw and Forsatta, Jadu Area (including Tormisa), Mizdah Area, and the Acacus Mountains, are extremely attractive to a whole range of travellers and tourists. Accordingly, it is believed in Libya that there is much potential for the present tourism industry to advance and generate millions of Libyan Dinars, through growth both nationally and internationally. In fact, it is envisaged that eventually, tourism income will match oil revenues. For such a vision to be a reality, however, there is a need for the government to develop a tourism strategy that will allow the effective growth of a new industry – tourism – that will support the economy for many years to come, and that is a task that requires great planning and attention to the ways in which other countries, especially near neighbours to Libya that have similar cultural backgrounds, have progressed their tourism development, in order to learn from their successes and mistakes.

However, in order to develop new sectorial approaches, including tourism, Libya must satisfy its immediate needs for trained manpower, with both knowledge and enhanced skills. Management in particular is considered very



important, since organisational success is dependent upon effective management. To facilitate such manpower developments, the Ministry of Education has already started sending people abroad for short and long-term training, with Human Resource Development specifically in education, project management, marketing, and tourism, being the main focus of this type of investment.

Furthermore, Libya's recent political history has placed the country in a position where, although there are abundant attractions for tourists, the perception of Libya as a feasible, and safe, tourist destination, is not high because of the political isolation in which the country found itself after US sanctions. Nevertheless, the government's plan is to attract 895,000 tourists by 2018, so the need for the current research which aims to examine the potential infrastructure for an effective tourism sector in Libya, is clear. Moreover, without a proper survey of the developments so far, and a strategy for the future that is developed on the basis of tourism theory, the correct infrastructure will not be put into place, and the chances of sustainable tourism will disappear.

It is the potential of tourism to help in the development of Libya's economy, which this research addresses.

The researcher's personal motivation for conducting this study lies in the fact that the topic is a new one for research in Libya, and that without doubt, in the future, tourism must play a pivotal role in strengthening the national economy. Furthermore, it is recognised that the study will provide an opportunity to gain experience in how to conduct a systematic investigation into tourism development and to learn in some depth how to present research results clearly and convincingly in an academic format.

In Libya, the oil industry alone will not be able to meet the rising demands and expectations amongst all sections of society. Therefore, from 1992 onwards, economic diversification has been a regular feature of in the development



strategies pursued by the state in preparing for a non-oil future. The tourism sector has been introduced as an option to diversify the national economy, and it is believed that Libya has the potential to become one of the most attractive places for tourists in North Africa.

During the last few years, Libya has begun to develop its tourism industry, and received visitors, especially from neighbouring, and some European, countries. However, as a tourist destination, it is considered by the government, to be in the early stages of development, and when tourism receipts are compared with other North African and Middle East countries such as, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, etc., this is confirmed.

In fact, Libya has failed to achieve the economic targets set for the tourism sector, a situation which might be due to the above-mentioned reasons and to the low priority given to the sector's development, which has resulted in the observed slow progress. Furthermore, other factors, such as lack of investment, lack of effective promotion, the absence of awareness and knowledge in the principal tourist markets of the Libya's tourism resources and attractions, and inaccurate perceptions about the culture and lack of personal security, might be other reasons.

The purpose of conducting this kind of study is to identify the tourism potential and the problems that hinder the development of this potential. Having undertaken such research, some recommendations to solve the problems will be proposed, which will help policy-makers at national and regional levels to improve Libya's tourism growth.

Clearly, the slow progress being made in Libya's attempts to become an attractive tourist destination, provides a strong justification for this research. Eccles (1995) argues that the value of tourism development for both advanced and developing countries is so great that such development deserves very careful attention. Busby (1993) notes that in developed countries particularly,



massive increases in international tourism have resulted in demands for improved health, education, trade, leisure, and recreation, and social purposes, have encouraged people to travel, and that this has been made easier by improvements in travel technology and levels of personal disposable income. In such societies, economies have been diversified, and regional variations have become more balanced, as a result of tourism development, and in developing countries, opportunities for more and better employment have been produced (Wearing and Nail, 1999). Libya's current state of national development would profit from such benefits of tourism, if the industry could be properly established and sustained.

It was in recognition of such continual opportunities for economic diversification through the development of tourism and its integration into general economic strategy that the WTO (1998:1 /7) documented:

"In all regions, tourism offers an important addition to the local economic activities by providing additional local employment in regional and sub-regional development plans and programmes and due investment priority needs to be allocated for tourism related development projects."

But, there are several obstacles to effective tourism planning in developing countries, thus enhancing the need for the type of research undertaken in this study. In particular, such problems are as follows:

Firstly, because government is usually the sole decision-maker in national planning, over-centralisation of tourism planning, resulting in inefficiency is prevalent, and corruption in many such governments has led to interference in free trade and disastrous consequences (Harrison, 1988). In 1980, the WTO reported that 43.5% of 1,619 assorted tourism plans in developing countries were never implemented, since despite their governments' acceptance of the need to do so, they lacked the discipline and forethought to carry it out. As noted by Zhang et al (2000), high centralisation in respect of tourism planning



may result in poor decisions and the implementation of plans in the absence of careful consideration of regional and local conditions.

Secondly, in many developing countries, the culture of planning has involved the production of regular plans to cover certain periods, and the idea of planning being a dynamic, ongoing activity at different levels is not ingrained (Wall, 2005). In this tradition, market research and evaluation do not emerge as crucial dimensions of planning for tourism. Furthermore, because of the over-centralisation, there is rigidity in planning, and a bureaucracy that prevents the timely response to any problems that may occur at local level. However, as writers have emphasised (Mill, 1990; Wall, 2005), the failure to take account of the opinions and requirements of local communities in the planning process may cause socio-economic and environmental problems that appear as obstacles to the development.

Phillips (2000) makes the point that such plans may be too simplistic, with no evidence of integration, an opinion that is supported by Gunn, and Var, (2002) who stresses that tourism development plans must be considered within the framework of a country's socio-economic and political policies, the natural and built environment, and socio-cultural traditions. This requires their adaptation to other sectors of the economy and their financial schemes and the international tourism market (Ayres, 2000).



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